

Northern California News and Events

Trade Forum in Chico

One of the most overlooked yet important accomplishments this Congress was the strong bipartisan approval of trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea. Recently, I joined with Ambassador Isi Siddiqui, Chief Agricultural Negotiator at the U.S. Trade Representative's office, and other officials to help make sure the farmers, ranchers, and business leaders in Northern California know about the opportunities these agreements have created and can take advantage of them.



As one of our nation's richest agricultural regions, Northern California stands to gain tremendously from the export opportunities created by these agreements. Improved market access can translate to more jobs both on and off the farm in our communities, including transportation workers, processors, packers, sales and marketing workers and other administrative staff. This forum provided a great opportunity for our local businesses to find out how to capitalize on these market-opening agreements. I look forward to seeing Northern California businesses grow and hire more workers as they implement what they learned.

Ribbon Cutting at Yuba-Sutter VA Outpatient Clinic

Recently, I participated in the ribbon cutting for the new Yuba-Sutter VA Outpatient Clinic, which will provide a range of health services to Northern California veterans in its Yuba City location.



With the opening of this clinic, veterans will be able to access primary care and preventative care without having to travel long distances. This is an important improvement in caring for our veterans, and I look forward to seeing its success in serving the Yuba-Sutter area.

Right Now

Department of Labor Abandons Regulation Threatening Family Farms

I wanted to follow up on my previous e-update and let you know that the Obama administration has abandoned its plan to limit youth under 16 from working on family farms. This rule would have made it difficult for youth to get the experience they need for a career in agriculture, such as moving livestock and operating machinery. Because of the implications for family farms in Northern California and across the nation, I cosponsored H.R. 4157, the Preserving America's Family Farms Act, which would have prevented the regulation from going into effect. In December, I also joined over 150 other representatives in expressing opposition to the

proposed rule. While the administration has backed down from this plan under pressure, I will continue to work to protect American farmers from any other obtrusive regulation that may be put forward by the administration in the future.

Recent Past

Supreme Court Reviews Arizona's Immigration Law

I wanted to follow up on my previous e-update regarding the Supreme Court's review of Arizona's immigration law. Recently, the court heard oral arguments on the Obama administration's case against the immigration law. While it's difficult to predict a final decision, several of the justices expressed strong skepticism with the reasoning behind the government's lawsuit. The core question is whether states can help enforce federal immigration laws. The Obama administration is arguing that state police officers would be violating federal authority over immigration if they check the status of someone they lawfully stop. Arizona argues that police officers would only be assisting with the enforcement, noting that the law explicitly leaves the decision to detain or deport illegal immigrants with federal law enforcement. I believe there is clear evidence in federal law that empowers states to assist with immigration enforcement, and I hope that the Supreme Court will recognize this when they make their ruling in the next few months.

Holding Russia Accountable

Vladimir Putin was recently inaugurated for a third term as president of Russia after previously serving in that position from 2000-2008. This is especially noteworthy because of the questionable process Putin initiated in 2008 to maintain a prominent leadership role and put him in prime position to reoccupy the office this year. It is also significant because the recent presidential election was marred by charges of fraud and concerns that Russian police used excessive force against citizens protesting the results.

The policies of Putin and his predecessor are even more troubling. Russia helped Iran build its nuclear program and has consistently blocked or weakened international sanctions against the Iranian regime. It is currently providing the Syrian government with weapons to fend off a democratic uprising that has already left over 10,000 protestors dead. The Russian government has also seized major private sector businesses, and is opposed to U.S. efforts to strengthen our missile defense capabilities. In response to their long held objections, President Obama in 2009 abandoned plans to boost our missile defense in eastern Europe, and just a few weeks ago he was overheard whispering to Russia's former president that he would have "more flexibility" after his potential reelection to negotiate further changes to our missile defense program.

